Love Is Thicker Than Blood (New Version)

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Love Is Thicker Than Blood (New Version)

by KitsuneGirl911

Summary

First Will Graham falls for the Chesapeake Ripper, and then he finds out he and Hannibal aren't really human... Could his life get any weirder? Oh, hello Matt.

[[8-5-19: This is the new version of this series, after some edits! The Legacy Version is discontinued, read this one instead!]]

Notes

Hey guys, I have been meaning to edit this series to revisit it for months and finally churned out the fixes all in one night, so here it is. My new version of What Monsters Fear, fics 1 and 2. Tl;dr, the edits don't change anything other than Matt is kept in the friendzone by Will (I don't really ship them anymore, after Hannigram has come so far and became official), and the heat isn't mentioned much because it's been pushed off to allow for more plot first. Both of those things had been completely killing my desire to continue this series (despite having an entire story planned out for part 3), hence the edit and new version.

Not much has changed, but you might want to reread them both to remember things for part three, when it eventually comes. :)

Prologue

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

He stood poised and still in the wooded clearing; the only thing he moved was his restless gaze. His eyes skittered over the evening scenery in search of something between the peeling black and white tree trunks and their branches that snatched at the sky with greedy claws. He could feel a figure lingering in the edges of his peripheral vision just as clearly as he felt the chilling fall wind whispering against the back of his neck. It was just enough to make his hackles rise in protest. Something pitch black and dangerous was out there. It wasn't the absence of sufficient sunlight to reveal the birch tree woods clearly that led him to that conclusion. No. Instead it was the presence of a pit of pure shade that had clued him in. A fear that skulked between worlds was made tangible on the edges of his considerable awareness.

"We are the same; there is nothing about *us* to feel horrible about," that voice of silk and steel purred out from the darkness, worming its way through the chilled night air to settle deep into his psyche. He knew whose voice that was. He knew what that voice meant for his life. Like the fabled wolf in the wood, it casually stepped out from its pool of darkness, one ebony hoof crunching the leaves that lay underfoot as the beast finally let itself appear before him. The autumnal scent of dried leaf litter suffused the clearing with a dim glow. "Hello, Will."

The greeting was spoken in a civil volume, but to Will it crashed and cracked through the near silence just as loudly as the gunshot reports of the leaves crumbling to pieces under the stag's hooves.

"Hello… Hannibal," Will replied with a slight smirk, pausing just enough before naming the beastly apparition looming calmly over him to stress the importance of his carefully chosen words. Though there was no twitch of expression apparent on the silent and gaunt being's face, Will could tell it- *Hannibal*- was pleased.

Will's mind was screaming warnings in his ear even as the man stood his ground fearlessly in the presence of this black and dangerous creature carved of bone, ice, and feathers.

Run! Run back to the path, to safety! Will thought he could hear a voice in his head shout, desperation coloring the tinny timbre of it, *Oh, Sweet William, pick your namesake flowers away from the Wolf that charms you so prettily!*

Will glanced down briefly at his hands. Steady and sure, they bore a blinding splash of blood that was even entrenched under his fingernails. *A red cloak I ride with indeed…* Will joked to himself, giving no outward indication of the silent warning he'd heard… or his mental dismissal of said caveat.

The wooded clearing of stark blacks and whites lurched, and then the pair was seated at Will's understated yet functional table. It was Will's reliable and affordable table, but Hannibal's lavish place settings graced its plain surface now. Two plates were positioned

perfectly between them; light from the window nearby illuminated the carefully crafted entrée they shared. Will was stripped of his glasses as well as the layers of clothing that usually guarded his true self from the view of the world; he was simply wearing now what he wore to bed. Without the detriment brought on by his constant and tiring efforts to conceal his nature from the nurture of his acquaintances, Will felt freed. He relaxed back into his chair and raised his chin with bold confidence to take in Hannibal's appearance. Will took his time, clothing the beast from the clearing piece by complex piece with Hannibal's expensive plaid suit. The stag of feathers revealed his true monstrous form with a man's slow smooth smile as Hannibal said genially,

"Finish your breakfast," his command hidden under layers of politeness and calm composure. Will turned his focus to the dish displayed with loving attention to detail upon fine bone china. The meat was cooked rare, with the warm red drizzled prettily in spiraling stripes of flavor over the varying cuts of animal's flesh piled delicately upon each other. The scent of molten copper gave a sharp tang to the air and Will's nostrils flared slightly as he took deep longing breaths of it.

"It looks delicious."

Hannibal inclined his head in a modest acknowledgment of the compliment; the corners of his eyes crinkled a bit as if he were laughing heartily at some cosmic joke and not just grinning slightly at Will's pleased expression. Will took up his knife and fork in hands that trembled slightly with anticipation. As he sliced a choice cut of meat into more manageable pieces, Will's mouth watered with uncontrollable greed. More crimson liquid seeped across the plate's surface as it trickled steadily from the source.

Will didn't question the way his tongue snaked from his mouth to wrap around the morsel he had speared with his fork and brought up to his eager parted lips. As he drew in the succulent carnivorous sustenance, sparks exploded in his brain and he moaned around his mouthful at the sensation. Whatever this was, it tasted *so right*. Will sat and blinked and savored the moment slowly, pleased yet puzzled by the flavors mingling inside his mouth in sublime patterns. There was something slightly odd about the meat though… Will couldn't quite tell what it was.

Will awoke fully then, the beautiful dream world fading into the bleak blandness of his bedroom as his alarm blared its way into the air. He could hear his dogs snuffling and moving about outside his door, no doubt eager to start the day with him. Will sluggishly fumbled with the buttons on his clock to stop the noise from grating on his nerves, then sat up and scrubbed the sleep from his eyes with the back of one hand.

I actually slept pretty well last night, despite that dream… Will mused silently as he got to his feet at last. He stretched languidly as he padded to his front door to let his pack outside. Will stood outside with them, smiling at their cheerful exuberance and basking in the warm morning's light. But Will couldn't quite relax- at least, not as much as he had in his dream. *Or was that a hallucination?*

Chapter End Notes

I am desperately in need of people to talk fic with, does anyone know any groups or is anyone willing to message me? I don't really need a full beta, but talking about my ideas has always allowed me to write more and faster, so it'd be a great help. Is there a Discord or something that Hannigram-shippers are on? DX I have no idea where to start. Also feel free to talk about other fandoms because gods I'm in so many and several new ones like Lucifer, Good Omens, and Preacher (yay season 4!).

Chapter One

Hannibal Lecter had settled on one of the dark and comfortable chairs in the center of his therapist's office; Bedelia perched stiffly on her own chair, set directly across from him. The sunlight streaming into the room from the wall of windows behind Bedelia filled the open space with gold brightness. As per the usual at Hannibal's appointments, the pair of psychiatrists had already achieved a level of crisp cool static between them, despite the actual therapy session not having started yet. A slight upturn of Bedelia's chin before she spoke signaled to Hannibal that the wait was over.

"Hannibal, I've noticed a… change starting within you. It appears something new has entered into your life these past few days. Or, rather- some*one* new."

"They must be quite the fascinating person to have caused such a notable difference in my behavior." Hannibal replied, tone both light and lightly warning. "What kind of changes are you seeing?"

"As we spoke last session, I mentioned the 'human veil' you have fashioned over time." Bedelia paused, allowing her patient a moment to remember the conversation. Hannibal's face remained near-impassive for a brief second before he gave a small smile and teased,

"Ah, yes, my 'human shield'."

"We discussed the subject of friends." Bedelia prompted in a clipped tone, tilting her head to one side and showing her readiness to listen to whatever Hannibal had to say next. Hannibal mentally connected the unspoken dots, and looked both pleased with Bedelia and puzzled by her at the same time, though neither sentiment reached his eyes.

"So this change is not so much due to a new acquaintance… but rather a new way of seeing a current acquaintance?" The man was more serious as he carefully chose his words now than he had been for the duration of his session. Bedelia remained silent and yet still receptive. Hannibal had to draw his own conclusions now that the path was laid down for him. Continuing that train of thought, Hannibal stated, "I assume you are talking about Will Graham."

"You build more than just shields, Hannibal. You build walls. Standards are a form of walls, and yours are the highest I've ever seen." Bedelia spoke frankly, knowing Hannibal would see the compliment for what it was. "When those standards are approached, you become interested. When something meets your standards, you desire to keep it. But nothing and no one has ever approached *surpassing* the walls you've constructed, Hannibal. Now you add a new fortification, and Will Graham finds a way to get around it."

"Expressing my personality as a logical equation?" Hannibal mused aloud, "In that case, what would you say my reaction would be to the eventuality of this progression? If he somehow succeeds… what then?"

“Desperation.” Bedelia knew Hannibal trusted her immensely- or rather, trusted in his power over her- for he did little to hide how disquieted that answer made him feel. “This desperation will be to both keep Will Graham in your life permanently, and to keep to your current status quo. But you cannot have them both.” Hannibal had been silent and very still since asking his question; he continued to act like a living statue as he absorbed this new line of prescience from his therapist. Bedelia leaned forward and softened her voice slightly, “You will be in uncharted territory, Hannibal. You won’t have the tools you need for this journey; though knowing the way that you are, I assume you will create them rather quickly. Expect to go through a profound upheaval of your world, of everything you ever knew to be true. Will Graham will tear your walls down from their foundations… It’s up to *you* what emerges from the wreckage.”

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Will snuck through the oft-unused back hallways in the BAU, grateful that their status quo of being deserted still held true today. The profiler’s shoulders were hunched and he wished he’d had the presence of mind to bring his coat. However, Will knew it would be even more suspicious to have the coat on indoors and its collar turned up to stop his gaze from alighting on anyone. He just couldn’t deal with having someone else in his head right now, riotous as his own mental space was.

Blinders. I could really use some blinders. Will thought with bitter irony, *But Jack wouldn’t like that, would he? His precious tool hindered by something, no matter how comforting… unthinkable.* He had been on edge all day, from before he even left for work that morning. It seemed that dream set something unfettered deep inside of him. All he could think about was Hannibal. That in itself was pretty much the norm for Will, but the fact that the obsessive mental loop was causing him to lose the concentration he needed to go about his routine was not.

It was strange, this yearning he felt. He downright ached for… something. A ‘something’ in the way of release, as it were. As such he was furtively making his way to the men’s room tucked far in a back corner of the BAU’s depths. Will knew no one used it much, partially due to its out-of-the-way nature, but mostly because the cleaning staff didn’t frequent this bathroom as often as the others. No interruptions were likely.

For Will was desperate enough to lock himself into a stall and try to stoke the fire burning low in his gut in the hopes it would fizzle out upon orgasm. Will reached his destination sooner than he’d expected he would; he knew then that he hadn’t been this frenetically eager to masturbate (in a semi-public setting, no less) since his teenage years. And that realization did nothing to quell the urge. Far from it, in fact. Will stumbled through the door and locked it behind him with shaking hands. He was alone.

Hand shoved down the front of his pants before he’d even partially closed the stall door, Will felt more than he heard the little whine building up in his throat. Fumbling with the button that had been pulled tight by his erection, Will cursed and leaned back against the wall. The cool tiles felt wonderful against his fevered body, even through the layers of clothing that he couldn’t care enough to remove at this point. Since it wouldn’t immediately help him get off, Will ignored it.

He thought of Hannibal again. The scenarios were clearer this time. Blood, teeth, and strong broad hands. Sharp cuts and a hot wet tongue caressing his skin in tandem. Will panted in harsh stuttering breaths as he stroked himself roughly, hips jerking forward to meet every downward motion of his hand. He wanted more. He wanted Hannibal. Hannibal looming devilishly over him, his heavy weight on top of him, cock perfect and deep *inside* him.

Will forced his grey-blues open, to come out of his overwhelming mind space as he neared the inevitable end. He meant to channel the wild rush into a controlled surge by bringing his current surroundings into focus. Will's chin dipped down to his chest as he moaned again, the low soulful cries near-constant by this point. Then he saw it.

Someone had scrawled a crude joke upon the stall's door with a black Sharpie: *Will eats Hannibal's meat.* Will laughed in a strangled way as he came right then and there, harder than he'd ever come before. Will's head flung back into the tile wall behind him forcefully enough for the cracking noise to be audible, even through the blood pounding against his ears with loud primal drumbeats. The sharp concussive pain only added to the stars already shooting strobe-like through his synapses. Will felt the thousand swarming thoughts he suffered with regularly just slide away in a slow easy haze, just as his physical self followed suit down against the warmed tiles behind him.

When Will came to he was sitting on the back of the toilet, a million epiphanies roaring their truths to him through fang and claw. The joke was no mere double entendre- it was a *triple* entendre of sorts. Will saw several things simultaneously, clear as if on a starry moonlit evening. He needed Hannibal as a lover. He wanted to eat Hannibal's lovingly prepared meals again and again. And he knew Hannibal was the killer he'd been searching for, in more ways than one. The Chesapeake Ripper was one Hannibal Lecter; the meat he'd wondered at pleasantly was of human origin. Will was right, the thing he'd ached for was a release... but not a release limited purely to the sexual sense. Though that was quite assuredly a large part of it.

He stared at the thick black letters on the back of the stall's door and finally cracked a lopsided smirk at the meta-humorous line. The dark and haphazard graffiti was covered in the whitish streaky pearls of his cum. It was art. Before he cleaned off the stained surface Will took out his cell phone and took a snapshot of the debauched tableau. He sent the image to Hannibal's phone with a simple accompanying text:

I know.

Chapter Two

Hannibal strolled unhurriedly to his Bentley in a pensive but peaceful mood after his appointment with Bedelia had concluded. Hannibal looked out at the bright semi-wooded area surrounding his therapist's office with a smug grin of sorts. He was confident again, assured that his overarching plan would still come to fruition, despite the setbacks he was faced with. Hannibal Lecter was not a man to wallow in doubt. He did not doubt his desire for Will, nor did he doubt that he would have him as his own beloved possession before long. That was nothing new. What was new now was his recently adapted course of action. If others could tell that Will was changing Hannibal just as much as Hannibal was changing Will, their continued separation to arm's length would look… suspicious at the very least; their distance would cause profound worry at best.

Yet Hannibal never stepped into anything without careful consideration. He needed a sign that Will had passed that one last test before he broached the topic to Will. A text sent to his phone made a quiet chime ring out from his coat's right pocket. Very few people actually texted Hannibal Lecter, so he knew it was sure to be something interesting. He wasn't wrong. A slow and easy smile stretched wickedly across Hannibal's face as he took in the impromptu photo; Will's caption provided the needed final proof of his worth to the psychiatrist.

The caption was vague, but to Hannibal, that vagueness was rather telling. Will obviously meant more than one meaning by the two-word phrase. The fact that the FBI profiler didn't elaborate on those meanings, despite the private nature of the photo, told Hannibal that Will didn't want this message to be traceable evidence. Hannibal was tickled pink by the implications. Will accepted him for who he was. And what more could anyone ever ask for? It was a rare thing indeed to have someone see us for who we truly were in the deepest darkest pits of our psyche… and embrace that hidden self wholeheartedly.

This kind of candid confession deserved an appropriate response. Hannibal couldn't wait until their usual appointment time to see Will. Hannibal was never one to deny himself any sort of pleasure- unless it would be heightened by postponement, that is. He had to have his dear William. Now.

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Hannibal's bedroom was a well-secreted treasure. A den of a fashion, one might say. Placed within a maze of confounding doors and pathways, Hannibal had never let anyone set foot in the dark and intensely personal space. Hannibal's bedroom door was no different than any of the doors on this floor of his house, to keep a bit of mystery about him should someone manage to wander nearby. Inside, the room was dimly lit and windowless; Hannibal's vision was not far behind his highly attuned sense of smell, therefore it was meaningless (and wasteful) to light a room brightly that he alone would see.

Well, Hannibal wasn't going to be the only person setting foot in the room's dark but comforting atmosphere anymore. The smile that split Hannibal's face was mostly made of teeth and fervor. *This is* our *bedroom now.* He reiterated mentally, pleased with the way the

words sounded, even inaudible as they were. The décor was bold and dangerous, just like Hannibal Lecter himself. Bone and horn and opulence screamed softly from every corner and subtle nook. The bed itself was of the finest quality. Personally, Hannibal would settle with nothing less than the best for himself and his nightly comfort. The bed frame was carved of rich ebony wood and fitted with silk sheets of claret; a thick black fur blanket was draped overtop the wine-red pools of fabric as an inky reminder of man's animalistic nature. Hannibal thought it was quite the pleasing and ironic motif overall.

And soon he would be sharing it with his dear Sweet William, the gallant flower's roots soon to be wrapped unrelentingly around his life- in more ways than one. Hannibal had responded to Will's heartfelt text with a pictorial message of his own. He had invited Will over to head towards the mutual pleasurable end to this first dance that they both knew was coming on as swift and sure as the tides of a black ocean. Right on time, Hannibal heard his doorbell ring; Will had arrived.

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Will stood on Hannibal's doorstep, body and mind thrumming with desperate energy. He felt more content with his actions in this moment than he'd felt for longer than he knew he was so discontented. When Hannibal opened his front door, Will felt as though he was seeing Hannibal for the first time, so profound were the changes to his perception of the man. Hannibal now had no need for his masks around Will any more than Will did around Hannibal at present. Hannibal stood tall and powerful before Will, a toothy grin upon his face as he stepped aside to allow the FBI profiler to enter the notorious killer's personal domain. Hannibal seemed to loom over Will just as in the man's basest fantasies, despite maintaining his permanent polite mien.

"I bet your bedroom looks even better in person." Will stated bluntly, flashing his phone to show that he'd received the picture Hannibal had taken not too long ago. Hannibal took Will's coat with a low satisfied sound; Will understood both what the image was of as well as its implications.

The pair both knew what would happen next.

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Hannibal laid Will down carefully, if not gently, upon those sinful, liquid-feeling sheets; the black fur covering was pulled back but not tossed messily aside. He trailed icy hot cuts along Will's heaving sweat-soaked skin with his most cherished scalpel. Will trembled, nearing rapture as Hannibal traced lovingly painful caresses into his pale skin. The once surgical, now sexual, blade was slightly duller than Hannibal usually allowed- yet it was not from lack of care. Far from it, in fact.

Will made a high and needy sound as Hannibal pulled the metal edge away from his skin; the ritual carving and rendering of Will's desperate flesh postponed for a moment.

"Don't cry for mercy, Will…" Hannibal chided gently, "There's still more pain to come." The black heat of Hannibal's promise was further stoked when an agile tongue took the scalpel's place to lap up the blood pooling prettily on Will's heaving chest.

“Good.”

Will swore this was a waking dream, a hallucination meant to torment him with a long laundry list of subconscious desires. But the liquid fire pooling in Will’s gut could never be replicated by a lie. This was happening, finally, and Will purred with how happy that made him feel. Will unintentionally undulated in small figure-eight patterns, as best he was able to with Hannibal’s solid weight pinning him down under constant adoring force.

A low rumble emanated from deep inside Hannibal’s chest; the sublime taste of his dear, dear Will’s inner darkness tugging his own out into the open in turn. *It wouldn’t do to give in to the heat of the moment…* Hannibal admonished himself in his mind idly, his mouth busy with its culinary explorations, *No sense in rushing a masterpiece, after all.*

Will shifted languidly beneath the warm slick muscle probing deep into the many lacerations littering his lean torso, pulling his knees up and apart unhurriedly. Large confident hands slithered possessively around the prominent bones of Will’s wrists. The man underneath Hannibal’s body twisted and yanked feverishly against the punishing grip. Both of them could feel the bone shifting and spreading slightly as Hannibal found just the right place to get between the joints. The pressure from Hannibal’s fingers steadily increased once he had found where he had been searching for. Will could hear his own adrenaline throbbing through his body as his fingers twitched uselessly, still trying to fight the grip that effectively immobilized his wrists and hands.

Taking advantage of Will’s shuddering gasp, Hannibal chased the air Will desperately needed into his lover’s mouth with his tongue. Likewise taking advantage of the situation, Will bit down savagely enough to tear a large gash on the side of Hannibal’s tongue. The molten coppery rush of flavor had both of them groaning as they shared Hannibal’s blood between them. Biting on the *side* of Hannibal’s tongue, as opposed to the easier to reach middle or tip, was less meant to reduce the pain and more to leave that clever mobility that Will enjoyed. And he certainly enjoyed Hannibal’s tongue writhing inside his mouth, spreading blood and saliva across every available surface. Will especially savored the way the slick muscle would twitch every so often; even Hannibal’s iron self-control couldn’t suppress his body’s natural reaction to such sharp pain.

Eager for more, and feeling slightly vindicated because the surgeon’s hands had been grinding together the various bones in his captured wrists, Will dug his own quota of red from the skin over Hannibal’s ribs with his nails, the crescents left behind screaming possessiveness and love. Blunt as Will’s fingernails were from the wear and tear that came with his occasional manual work, Hannibal’s pain was magnified considerably. Chuckling into their meshed mouths, the doctor ignored his lover’s demand in favor of indulging his palate some more. Will retaliated by surging forward to clack their teeth together loudly, managing to snag one thin lip between them hard enough to bruise. Not wanting to be a discourteous lover, Hannibal conceded to Will’s not-so-subtle message. He gave one last long lick along the top of Will’s tongue, painting one final stripe of blood over the many different taste receptor areas Hannibal knew would be activated by his crimson essence.

Hannibal pulled back just far enough to speak, but then took a long moment to enjoy the view. Will’s plush lips were reddened and swollen by the constant crushing force, but his

teeth… The white surface, once innocuously immaculate, had become stained with ropes of Hannibal's blood that had pooled unevenly. A tenuous tendril of sanguine-tinged saliva connected this beauty not only through their eyes, but as a visceral thing that hung between their slack lips. As the thin thread inevitably snapped, so too did Hannibal's silence.

"What would everyone say if they saw you thus, my dear Will? Your painstakingly concealed, snakelike shade uncoiled from your bottom-most depths, writhing viciously only for *me*, hm? Would it break you to feel the disparaging weight of their horror bore needlessly into you? They would feel betrayed by you… yet again. And in that moment you would know that nothing could stitch that wound closed for them ever again.

"Nothing you can do will change who you are; once they see your truth in all of its grievous glory… your life in their world would end. And then you'd turn to the only one who can help you stem the gush of blood. I'm the *only one*, Will." Hannibal's sibilant speech wrapped inexorably around Will's consciousness just as Hannibal's solid weight pinned Will's flesh under their mutual lust. Will just flashed a crooked grin and bucked his hips sharply up into Hannibal's, upsetting both the other man's careful position and his smug expression.

"But they will *never* see me as I am now. Know why?" Will queried in his smuggest voice, slipping his words between their harsh breaths and feral cries to answer his own rhetorical question, "You wouldn't allow them the privilege, would you? You want me all to yourself. And I *am* yours." Will watched as, upon hearing that dark promise, Hannibal's pupils dilated quickly, blown wide with feverish lust. Will rolled them over suddenly and settled his slighter weight across Hannibal's pelvis. "You said it yourself; you are the 'only one' I can turn to. I don't want this blood to coagulate between or within us." Will punctuated that affirmation with a savage snap at Hannibal's jugular. Hannibal only shifted slightly as he saw Will's greedy snarling grin approach.

Will moved like a swift and terrible wind that whipped through the air with natural power and grace. And Hannibal loved him for it. Yet Hannibal never thought he would feel this way in his lifetime. He never realized what the studies of human behavior couldn't afford him that personal experience would overwhelm him with. For once in his life, Hannibal Lecter could not predict what was going to happen next. Oh, he saw the inevitable endgame of this encounter, but beyond that? Nothing. Hannibal could not see Will's actions coming from a distance. He only saw each fascinating point of their combined timeline as it was nigh running him over and then plowing forwards onto its next inexorable destination. The train that carried them both along was running wild off the rails Hannibal had carefully set, and it was as wonderful and refreshing as it was terrifying and far too intense. And yet Hannibal wasn't sure he wanted that uncertainty to end. He had to work for this, work *with* this. Will was a challenge. He could not just coast along placidly, as he did with all things in his predictable yet pleasant life until now, when it came to one Will Graham.

Bedelia's words echoed back to him now unbidden, and he finally felt the desperation she described. *You cannot have them both, Hannibal. Will has undone you from your foundations; you have to press onwards now. You two must rise from the wreckage of your worldview together, or you will never feel safe again.*

While Hannibal lay pinned by his inevitable internal upheaval, Will turned around in a swift and calculated motion, ground his knees down into Hannibal's elbows, and then used his calves to immobilize the man's arms completely. Will turned his head to give his physically pinned lover a triumphant flash of sharp teeth. Not one to be conquered easily, and realizing his lower half was mostly freed, Hannibal started to push down into the bed with his feet surreptitiously to lever Will's advantage from him. Will saw it coming a mile away. He leaned forward and let his heated breath waft along the ridges of Hannibal's cock while he gripped the man's strong thighs tight with his fingertips. A quick squeeze to emphasize the point Will was making was enough to still Hannibal again.

Satisfied he'd earned compliance for the time being, Will set on a steady course down Hannibal's dick, engulfing that thick length in the slick velvet oven of his mouth with a blissful groan. Graced with a prime view of Will's backside, Hannibal tried to lean up to it, only to discover he was unable to reciprocate. He was effectively forced to be a bit rude. Hannibal huffed with impatience as he rested his head back onto their bed again. Feeling the aborted efforts and the frustrated sounds that followed after, Will hummed pleasantly in his throat and thereby tantalized Hannibal even further. Will blew Hannibal just long enough to coax him to full size, as he fingered his own entrance open scant inches away from Hannibal's face.

It was only after an eternity of pleasurable torture (ever the cruelest kind of all) for them *both* that Will finally deemed them both sufficiently prepared for what was to happen next. Will simply moved down Hannibal's torso, still facing away from him. Will's fingers splayed out as he slid his palms lower down on Hannibal's legs to grip them too tight with those still-reddened nails, making the other man grunt softly at the abrupt pain after the silken glide. In the next lurching instant, he guided Hannibal's now fully engorged dick up into his eager twitching hole.

Hannibal could hear everything; Will's throaty moans, gasps, and sighs of wanton abandon, the slapping impact of flesh upon flesh, and the absolutely obscene wet slide and squish amplified by Hannibal's abundant precum. But it was what Hannibal *couldn't see* that was driving him mad. He could see Will's spine curving in a graceful arch, his eyes following a single bead of sweat as it trickled down in stops and starts as Will rode him hard. Hannibal would've tried to lick it off, were he not sure Will would punish him for it. Will had his head tossed back, though only so far as to let Hannibal see the mop of chocolate curls, nary even a peek at his forehead. Hannibal knew Will had positioned himself that way on purpose.

Strong and lithely muscled thighs worked Will's body up and down over and over. As Hannibal watched him bounce crazily on his dick, Hannibal could guess that Will had his hands somewhere upon his own chest. Was he caressing the silk-soft pale skin as Hannibal longed to? Although by now a light pink flush borne of lust would be shading him like some sensual halo… Was Will stroking over those perky nipples at the same time? He'd probably be pinching and pulling the area to bring them into hardened and swollen peaks… Hannibal groaned low in his throat.

In counterpoint to Hannibal's more subdued noises of enjoyment, Will was constantly crying out and growling as they were brought closer and closer still to that sublime moment. That moment when they'd taking a flying leap of faith off the precipice their bodies had

surmounted together… Hannibal knew the expression that was overtaking his Will's face right about now. Bliss. Pure, sinful, visceral *bliss*. Will's eyes would be shut tight and yet his long eyelashes would still be fluttering against his cheeks like a tentative baby bird's wings. Though Will's actions were anything but tentative.

Will was definitely thinking this through, domineering the situation- and Hannibal- fully. Brow lightly furrowed with bone-deep concentration, Will made sure not to fail or falter on this self-imposed mission of his. His mouth was parted slightly, the tip of a delicate pink tongue darting out to moisten trembling rose petal lips. Hannibal pictured Will occasionally catching that plush lower lip with his lovely pointed teeth…

Their simultaneous strangled shouts of elated release eclipsed everything but the mutual rush of warm seed between their bodies, proving that they were together in this as they were in all things. Will trembled astride Hannibal and yet circled his hips with Hannibal still buried within him, stealing as much pleasure as he could from prolonging their orgasms. Every moment has its inevitable end, however, and soon there was no sense in forcing the issue. With a happy sigh, Will eased onto his side, taking his lover with him. Hannibal took his opportunity to lick away a few beads of sweat as he molded his body to Will's back. Hannibal believed the salty taste to be well worth the wait.

Everything with Will is well worth the wait, the older man thought as sleep stole into his mind with creeping comfortable darkness. He had his Sweet William in his beastly den as safe and secure as could be.

"What do you want, my dear Will?"

"Be *merciless*."

"Always."

The wreckage of the walls, rebuilt stronger now than ever, was cleared from Hannibal's contented mind and he and Will entwined powerfully around each other as they drifted off into Morpheus' black sea.

Chapter Three

Will roused from his pleasant doze as he heard that telltale growling and shuffling from a distance. He sighed in exasperation.

“I’ve been sleeping so well lately too…” Will groused, albeit halfheartedly since he was already thinking about whom exactly was responsible for that. A sharp whimper of pain reminded him he was needed in the moment here. Will hurried out to his dogs, ready to separate and scold the pair starting to fight; but he wasn’t prepared for what he saw. Every single dog in his pack had been resting just as soundly as he was. Will just stood there, numbed by shock. *No,* his mind stuttered, *No… No no no!* He’d been doing so well, what went wrong? Was he hearing things?

Winston padded over to him, sensing his distress, and gave Will’s hand a gentle lick. Will found himself back in the present again, immediately reassuring his worried dogs with a soft voice.

“I’m okay… It’s okay guys. It was just a dream, alright?” Inadvertently Will ended up reassuring himself too. He laughed a little at himself. “Jeez, getting worked up over a stupid dream… I must not be used to this whole ‘actually sleeping well’ thing.” His anxiety calmed now but still craving some lightheartedness, Will started to play with his dogs a bit. “Right Buster? I’m not sure what to do with myself now, am I?” The Jack Russell Terrier he directed his question at wagged his little tail like a furry metronome on high and gave a quick bark, excited now that he realized they were going to have fun. Everyone else jumped into the pile too, and soon the living room was a comfortable den of fur and tongues and Will’s delighted laughter.

And then he heard it. To be more accurate, this time they *all* heard it. Will and his dogs froze mid-tussle and listened, heads cocked to this side and ears straining to discern where the noise was coming from. Some poor creature was being killed. The savage growls of its attacker and sharp canine cries of agony disquieted them all. Will’s eyes were wide and pained; he felt the coyote’s mortal terror like it was his own. Low whines of sympathy chorused all around him as his pack realized what Will had. This fight would have a bloody end. And an end it would be, for the poor coyote that lost.

The snarls, snaps, and screeches of a hurt that would never be healed kept them all on edge for what seemed like a breathless eternity. Then it was over. That last cut-off cry sounding through all of their hearts was definitely the final nail in the proverbial coffin. Now that the fight was finished, some of Will’s pack stood on guard in front of him, the rest checking around the door and peeping out of the windows that they could reach to make sure they weren’t next. Will stayed on the floor, petting Winston absentmindedly as he watched his pack gradually calm as they were assured both their home and their beloved Will were safe and secure.

“Thanks guys. We’re always watching out for each other, huh?” Will said, relief flooding his voice and being as they made the unanimous decision to sleep tangled together on the floor

that night. The only thing that Will could think of to possibly enrich this cozy and cordial moment was to have Hannibal here with them. Hannibal would abhor the idea of sleeping in a veritable puppy pile of course, though he might be persuaded to do so with the right recompense for his suffering. The good doctor might even end up enjoying his night sleeping on the floor with Will and his dogs, warmed by the space heater and surrounded by unconditional love both canine and human. Will drifted off with a small smile tugging his lips and he dreamed of all the many manipulative ways to give Hannibal a taste of his own special brand of medicine for the first time in his life…

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Will traipsed through the snowy underbrush with Alana Bloom by his side the next morning. It was cold enough to necessitate Will's well-worn beanie, though he was too focused to spare any time to thoughts about its absolutely unflattering nature. Will knew it was quite ironic to finally have some alone time with Alana, free of interruptions… and not care how he looked. She wasn't a prospective partner to him anymore, just a close friend. Will smiled softly as he imagined Hannibal out here with him instead; he'd be pouting the whole time because of the snow, mud, and leaf litter gathering on his well-tailored clothes and fine shoes like iron to a magnet.

Will was brought back to the non-levity of the moment by Alana's words, "You're not expecting to find it alive, are you?" She stared at him with her wide wet eyes as if seeing him for the first time, and not knowing if she was dreaming. Will knew that feeling well as of late, and it wasn't due to his considerable empathy that he shared it with her now.

"We'll be lucky to find a paw." he grit out as they continued searching.

"If I knew we were looking for a *paw*, I'd have been looking closer." Alana's expression changed minutely, and Will felt the need to explain, if only to stop her from looking at him like… that. Like he was crazy. He *was* crazy, but Will didn't need her to know it; not now, not ever. Will heaved a mental sigh.

"I just want to get rid of anything that might attract predators." Will stated bluntly, eyes roaming over the ground and under frosted branches in a purposeful meandering path. He really did want to keep his pack safe; for once Will Graham didn't have to lie in order to get someone to help him without locking him up. *Maybe*, he mused to himself, *I should explain myself better, or more often?* It was quite useful, having a rational reason to trek through the pitch-dark caves of the human condition he seemed to keep falling into. And he *was* falling, like Alice tumbling into her Wonderland, falling into a fresh world that opened his eyes more with every new twist and turn. Will couldn't tell himself he didn't like it anymore- rather, he didn't bother trying. Hannibal had brought out the best of the worst in him, just as he'd been doing since they'd met. *You conniving little shit…* came the affectionate scoff to his mind.

"You invited me over to help you collect animal parts?" Now, Alana was just puzzled, uncertainty and fear for her friend evaporating slowly like fog over a lake.

Will shook his head. "No, I invited you over on the off chance we find it alive. Hard to wrangle a wounded animal by myself." An abrupt moment of clarity filled him with doubt, "Did you think it was a date?"

“Honestly?” she replied readily, “it never crossed my mind.”

Will went from relief to near-disappointment in the space of the two seconds it took him to ask, “Why not?”

Alana turned her piercing gaze to Will once more, though she still kept searching for the coyote, or whatever was left of it. “You just don’t seem like you date.”

“Too broken to date?” Will teased, shoulders relaxing from their slightly hunched position at last.

“You’re not broken.” Alana said firmly, and then she thought for a second before concluding, “You’re puzzled.”

“I *am* puzzled. What’s your excuse?” Will turned the observation back at his friend. This was the longest time he’d ever spent alone with her. It was nice, too; they were companionable and content around each other, for the most part. And yet Will couldn’t get anything romantic out of it. It seemed he was a one-man man.

“My excuse for not dating? Why are you assuming I don’t date?”

“Do you?”

“No.” Alana admitted, only a slight bit of guilt shading her voice, “Feels like something for somebody else. I’m sure I’ll become that somebody someday, but right now… I think too much.”

“It’s hard to date when you notice everything they do, *and* have a pretty good idea why they do it.” Will replied frankly. He had the same reason, before Hannibal came into his life.

“Worse than dating a psychiatrist is being a psychiatrist dating,” she summed up their conversation in so many words. Will had to work to remember her current ruefulness so he didn’t laugh out loud at the unintentional parallel to Hannibal and himself. Their brief moment of calm was broken soon enough, however. Will froze as he spotted a couple stray drops of red spattered over the virgin snow. The splash of color was a ways off, but undeniably there. “See something?” Alana asked in a small voice, shielding her eyes from the light with one fair hand as the blinding morning sun was intensified by all of the white reflecting it back up at them.

“Yeah, but I wish I didn’t.” Will remarked, striding cautiously in the direction of the trail. He held one hand out behind him, “Stay back a bit.” Alana nodded and kept quiet and off to his side, ever-mindful of her footsteps. The blood trail was old, that was for sure; the branches the animal’s blood had dripped upon were dry, not shiny or even sticky. Alana noticed this too.

“Will,” she began gently, following the man as he acted like a human bloodhound, “The trail here is old, there’s no way you heard this from your house…”

“Two coyotes were fighting last night.” Will repeated in a petulant tone, continuing towards the blood’s source relentlessly. A few yards later they found signs of a struggle; another animal had sniffed out the wounded beast, darting into its path from a perpendicular direction. Will walked faster, blocking out everything but the reddened and disheveled path he was stalking. This was it. This *had* to be it. Will barely remembered Alana was still trying to keep up with his now agitated pace. And then they found the corpse.

If it weren’t for the cold weather, the cloying stench and bugs would’ve been overwhelming.

“It *was* a coyote…” Alana whispered to in a reverent breath, but she caught herself halfway through wondering and made herself turn to her friend. “Will. You know this was a coincidence. We’re way, way too far away from your house! There’s no way you heard this specific fight!” Will had frozen still and cold as a statue.

“Y-yeah…” He murmured, creating a hesitant cloud of breath in the air before him. Will scrubbed his face with both hands. “I’m just over-thinking and… connecting random dots or something,” he said from behind his palms, trying to convince both Alana and himself simultaneously. “Let’s head back. I’m sure you’re freezing, right?” Will smiled shakily and Alana smiled softly back.

“You don’t look so hot yourself,” she joked, earning a new, less tenuous smile from her friend. Alana’s confidence in her assertions bled into Will’s mental space and calmed the profiler’s active imagination down somewhat.

Some time later, as he shut Alana’s car door for her, Will bade her goodbye with a whispered, “Thank you, Alana.” Her smile was just as blinding as the sun on the snow.

Chapter Four

Time slowed down to a sluggish crawl as the vase splintered under his fingertips. For a second of excruciating eternity, Hannibal watched the beauty die. It wasn't nearly as fun to accidentally crush a prized vase as it was to purposefully crush human bones… Hannibal heaved a great sigh of consternation; he would have to forgo tonight's outing to refresh his meat supply. The rude had tasted better to him lately, more so than any other fare, so it was a shame. However, it would not do to have such a mishap occur mid-kill and thus ruin the moment. Hannibal left the vase where it stood for now, his focus turning now to canceling the day's appointments.

Truly a shame...

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Will Graham stood in the pet store he frequented, resisting the strong urge to go play with the puppies that were up for sale in the front window. He was in a good mood again, so he was failing quite miserably. Truthfully, Will didn't mind the distraction; that's what he came here for anyway. Heaven knows his current dogs were spoiled enough. With a dopey grin skewing his face, Will decided to give in. It wasn't like he was going to end up with a new dog yet. Winston had settled in just fine, but Will didn't want to push his luck. Will had just turned his feet in the madly adorable puppies' direction when his world crashed onto his ears again.

A man had sauntered in, and strode purposefully towards the long wire wall of birdcages near where Will had broken down. Now, the unremarkable young man himself wasn't the spark that short-circuited Will's brain. Instead it was the cheerful din that the many songbirds struck up upon seeing that young man which obliterated any semblance of peace in the profiler's psyche.

Will could pick out each and every species of bird he heard singing, as well as the individual voiceprints of every particular bird within those same species. The overload of aural details felt as though it was something designed specifically to drive him mad… and it only grew worse from there. Will heard the reams of rattling carts squealing and tearing through his body. He could hardly stand the forlorn snuffling whimpers those poor puppies sobbed; they were taken from their mother too soon, and Will was struck bodily with a need to soothe all of them. He needed to make it stop! How could everyone else be so calm, so utterly at ease? The florescent lights overhead spun sickly and Will's mind was forced into vigorous somersaults to try and keep up.

Then the world lurched out from under Will's feet both literally and figuratively; he could do nothing about either. The heretofore unremarkable stranger acted quick as a flash and snagged Will with surprising force to prevent his body from colliding with the glass tanks next to them both. In the space of a few timely-used seconds, Will had avoided what would have been dire facial lacerations. The pet store's assembled patrons barely had time to hold their breath. *I need to get out of here! Hannibal, help me!* Will cried out in his head, and he

stumbled out onto the sidewalk in a blind panic, barely possessing the presence of mind to remember to actually drive and not simply run off on foot.

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Standing with the rest of the stunned crowd, Will's savior watched the distraught profiler flee the confining building. The younger man's pupils had blown wide enough that his eyes appeared as burning black coals and his gaze was a mix of avid fascination and mild concern as Will rushed out the door. Well. That had been something, hadn't it? A slow and sensual smirk caused one corner of his lips to quirk up with dark, gleeful lust. He had thought that gorgeous man smelled quite familiar, despite never having met him before. The erstwhile hero's pointed tongue swiped some of Will's blood out from under his nails with which he'd broken that pale skin, in order to grab a taste.

The store's little world settled back into normality, and the patrons bustled about again; no lasting harm was done after all. And so too did the young man who had inadvertently brought about Will's climactic collapse turn back to the songbirds to chirp cheerily along with them as he'd planned upon walking in. He was ecstatic now, even more so than he usually would be upon visiting his avian friends. Oh yes… This one was like him, he was sure of it.

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Hannibal set down the now irreparably torn tome he'd been practicing on when his doorbell rang seven times in quick succession. The only conclusion was that the source had to be Will, and in a state of profound distress at that. Hannibal frowned- slightly, mind you- for the umpteenth time since that morning's mishap. He didn't like undue damage to his possessions if he didn't cause it or wish it.

"Will," Hannibal greeted in as soothing a tone as he could manage at the moment, stepping aside so his lover could enter his austere domain. "What has brought you to my door in such a desperate state?"

Will stood shivering on Hannibal's doorstep for but a bare moment before he ducked inside gratefully. "Last night a couple of coyotes fought outside, and I heard one of them die." Will blurted, wrapping his arms around his own chest before rambling on in a shaky voice, "I heard it before the dogs did, but it happened so far away; it was way, *way* too far away for anything human to hear from my house- but I did, Hannibal!" Will finally met Hannibal's inquiring gaze with wide, watery, and storm-hazed eyes. Hannibal inwardly seethed; his Sweet William was so painfully beautiful like this- and *he* hadn't even been the cause! Hannibal consoled himself by realizing he was seeing this veritable work of art because Will knew to whom he belonged; he knew Hannibal was all the help he'd ever needed- now and forever. So Hannibal let his displeasure go for now, and focused on his beloved. "I heard everything better than my dogs! That was messed up enough, Alana's eyes said it all- We found the corpse, *we found the corpse!* All torn and alone and-" Hannibal had been smacked with great waves of the delectable scent that was Will's fear this whole time, but beneath that…

"You're bleeding, dear Will. How were you injured?" Despite the urge Hannibal felt to draw his distressed Sweet William into his arms, into his den to comfort Will and set his shattered

mind to rights again, he knew he could not. The risk of injuring Will irreparably now was too high. Hannibal had learned that much from his strength experiments today; the discarded text a testament to that unfortunate fact.

“Oh,” Will acknowledged numbly, taking a quick peek at his forearm, “I think I must've been scratched when I was yanked away from the fish tanks…” Will's mind had begun shutting down and Hannibal wasn't going to let that happen.

“Stay with me, Will. I’m going to get you something to clean that, alright? You focus on your breathing like I’ve taught you. I will be back to you shortly.” Hannibal spoke with such absolute and calm conviction that Will knew he’d made the right choice by choosing to come to Hannibal’s place. Will knew he’d made the right choice by choosing *Hannibal.* Will breathed in and out, slow and even, exactly five times before his lover came back to him as promised. Hannibal had a small first aid kit held gingerly in one hand as if he were afraid to break it before the little white box could help Will. It was damnably endearing, and Will calmed somewhat, smiling softly at the slightly frazzled psychiatrist; he looked like he could use a deep breathing exercise himself.

The man allowed Will his space, for which the still-unnerved profiler both appreciated and longed to change.

“Did you tell Alana Bloom about us?” Hannibal queried with an even voice. Will wearily wondered where this particular train of thought sprang from, wracking his brain for clues as he cleaned crescent cuts. Will had confessed to Hannibal about his odd and newly-discovered aural abilities, and now the man was asking whether their relationship was still clandestine? Hannibal staunchly exuded an exaggerated calm, powerful grace, and Will smirked as he echoed Alana’s words from that earlier conversation.

“Honestly?” he chirped candidly, “it never crossed my mind.”

The barely restrained tiger’s claws held hidden behind Hannibal’s inexplicable shift in attitude retreated back to the relatively safe position they’d been previously. “Then it seems we are on the same page, my dear Will.”

“Nothing about this seems, oh I don’t know, *strange* to you?” Will threw his arms out wide, nearly shaking in place with sheer exasperation.

“Of course not. We are still cementing the foundations of this relationship, and as such it is wise to keep those foundations covered, if only for a time.” The self-satisfied smile that graced Hannibal’s face made Will want to punch him good and hard. Will doubted Hannibal’s grin would fade if he gave into the urge- if anything, it would stretch wider.

“You know what I mean.” Will snapped tersely, pacing back and forth like a caged predator. He was probably scuffing up Hannibal's fancy-ass carpeting, so Will dragged his feet slightly to exacerbate the effect his anxious pacing was wreaking. Sensing the need to be serious, Hannibal schooled his features into a more sympathetic expression.

“I myself have been having… similar experiences.” the psychiatrist admitted, looking down slightly as if disappointed with himself for acknowledging the fact. Will stopped pacing and

stared at Hannibal with keen intent, watching him for any signs of lying. There were none.

“So what, you hear shit that no person should be able to hear too?”

“Language, Will.” Hannibal reproached quickly, but hardly paused before replying, “While the answer to that question is indeed a yes, that issue is not what I find myself struggling with. My senses have always been, shall we say… *sharp*.” Will rolled his eyes at the doctor and his absurdly obvious puns, but let him continue. “I have lost most of my control over my strength. More accurately, I have to keep adjusting that control to an ever-increasing power building within.” Hannibal smirked ruefully. “It has become rather tiresome.”

“You’re giving me Superman’s ‘World of Cardboard’ speech?” Will snorted in disbelief, before catching himself as he realized something. Hannibal had kept a modest amount of space between them at all times today, something he’d never bothered with before. Hannibal was actually afraid to touch him, lest he break his lover permanently. “What’s happening to us?” Will asked in a broken and scratchy voice, as his eyes watered up again with frustration and fear. Hannibal looked even more annoyed then, but Will knew it wasn’t directed at him. Hannibal desperately wanted to console Will with his body, but he couldn’t allow himself to do so; the internal warring of instinct and emotion was amplifying how discomfited the good doctor felt that his lover was upset.

The pair moped around together for a few hours, before grudgingly separating for the night knowing that this sulking session was useless. As Will trudged out to brush the snow off of his car he heard the shrill shriek of a bird of prey nearby. He looked up, hoping to catch a glimpse of the raptor as it soared high overhead; he was surprised to see the bird perching on a post not too far off.

The bird looked similar to a hawk, and yet no hawk could compare to this stunning avian predator. The bird looked bright and intelligent, and best of all free of any malcontent at the moment. Will smiled.

“Hello there. It's nice to have *something* benevolent around,” he greeted it genially. The hawk cocked its head to the side, regarding Will with one molten golden eye, before shifting its feet minutely and taking off in a flash of brown speckled feathers.

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Naturally, Matthew Brown made sure to see Will got home safely. In his hawk form, he flew well overhead the other’s car, keeping a watchful eye out for troublemakers on the road that evening. It was peaceful and fun to do so; Matt was gliding on thermals and enjoying the tranquility afforded him by virtue of the smaller birds now sleeping in their nests. Those songbirds couldn't pester him at night (it was only ever just because of what he was, so he couldn't really blame them). The owls weren't half bad though; they minded their own business.

That man who was so very much like him was still a bit agitated, and although he trusted Will’s driving skills to not falter… Matt just wanted to help keep him safe. And if Will’s place of residence was discovered simultaneously? Well, Matt considered that a particularly

pleasant bonus. He'd have found out anyway. Matt planned on finding out everything he could about one William Graham. Everything.

He started the very next morning, even though Matt would have loved to have stayed watch that night. But Will knew how to take care of himself, and right then he needed some space after such a stressful day. Will worked in the BAU, but he wasn't a full agent. The slightly skittish man seemed to prefer things to be that way, fortunately. All that stress on his poor, overtaxed system… a damn shame.

At least Will had one other person looking out for his wellbeing. A psychiatrist, no less! Thankfully Matt caught on that Dr. Lecter was one of them too, or he might have been noticed snooping around. As it were, he had to hide his presence in haste to avoid any suspicion. At least Will was well-protected when Matt wasn't there to help out. And yet Matt often *was* there, protecting Will in the sunlight and free air just as Dr. Lecter did from the coldness of space and shadow. Most importantly, Will had deep and honest feelings for this Dr. Lecter, so Matt was going to attempt civility for Will's sake. Matt had also learned from watching Dr. Lecter work that he was a formidable man- *that* much was for sure. But his kills, while quite lovingly and beautifully displayed, were only as brutal as was necessary to be efficient. Matt was shaking his head in disappointment when he noticed that fact. *Geez, doc… Live a little!* he thought sadly. Matt realized that Dr. Lecter would not take too well to him approaching Will while the other was alone. Matt could hold his own in a fight with the psychiatrist, but he still didn't really want to be on the receiving end of Dr. Lecter's wrath. Seriously though, that guy could hold one hell of a grudge...

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Will and Hannibal were gradually learning to control (or at the very least filter) their new abilities. Hannibal had much more practical experience in that regard; Will usually never had to hide his empathy. Empathy was an asset to the field in Jack's eyes, stable mental health be damned. On the other hand, Hannibal was very selective with what skills he allowed anyone to see; he seldom let any one individual witness more than one or two. Since Will knew practically everything about his lover's double life (Hannibal's dignity required at least a handful of secrets) it was rather straightforward for the other to pass on his expertise.

Naturally, par for the course, Will had to work for it. *Never let it be said Hannibal Lecter is one for handing anything over without a fuss…* Will thought with a wry grin, shaking his head slowly as he revisited the memories with fondness. Hannibal had sure given him a thorough run of his paces; the man had only subtly demonstrated the principles Will needed to stay stable by using them when Will was around. Once the profiler caught on to just what his lover was doing for him he was quick to show his appreciation in their bedroom.

Hannibal hadn't been sitting idle this whole time, mind you- he not only took back control of his strength, he set about further improving it. The psychiatrist had only taken a couple days off from seeing patients to boot. And with his body once more in check, Hannibal took *every* available opportunity to show Will his progress.

"Ha-Hannibal!" Will yowled in the most demanding voice he could muster while said psychiatrist was fucking him so brutally, "*More*." Ever the gentleman, Hannibal complied, and Will was glad they weren't in bed for that particular bout. The wall they rutted against

could hardly stay standing, so Will had no high hopes for their headboard- or the bed frame for that matter- surviving the onslaught. Will wore his lovingly earned bruises to the next crime scene with pride. Jack didn't even notice. What did that say about the other man’s work ethic? All in all, things were back to their status quo.

Chapter Five

Hannibal opened the door to his office with a practiced flourish, equally pleased both to see Will waiting for him on the other side and to see him right on time.

“Will,” Hannibal greeted his beloved with a lingering trace of professionalism in his voice and mien, “Please, do come in.” Will smiled widely at Hannibal in return.

Will wasn't offended in the least because he knew they were technically still just doctor and patient in the eyes of their friends. Besides, Will was absolutely sure it wasn't protocol to usher in one’s patient with a heavy and possessive hand at the small of their back. Will practically purred at how much Hannibal was his alone, and the profiler’s eyes slid into a half-lidded content state. Hannibal noticed this of course, if his inordinately proud aura was anything to go by. He took Will's coat from his shoulders gently before hanging it up with care. While Hannibal fussed with Will's coat, Will himself paced Hannibal's office, cataloging any slight changes automatically. The area Will had felt caged by before was now shared territory between him and his lover, as it should be at last. Hannibal was just about to start the evening’s pleasant conversation when he and Will both froze.

The office door was opened the barest of cracks, and a presence was lurking on the other side, stationed obliquely in Hannibal’s waiting room. The other person seemed to not be listening in, nor were they pressed right near the door.

“One mustn't linger in doorways- it's *rude*,” Hannibal stated, voice ringing out coolly into the silent air.

Will knew exactly what dark promise Hannibal meant by those words and tensed in anticipation. However, their unexpected guest seemed to catch the danger too. Matt pushed the door he'd opened to alert the pair to his presence the rest of the way open, and then leaned casually into the room.

“Sorry,” Matt apologized with honest intent, despite the soft, semi-sarcastic knuckle rap on the wooden door as he sauntered in, “I wasn't trying to invade your privacy.” Tense situation momentarily dissipated, Will couldn't stay serious any longer.

“C’mon, you're quoting *Ursula* now?” Will snorted incredulously at Hannibal.

“Hey, don't knock Disney- there's some awesomely dark themes in those movies!” Matt piped up in Hannibal's defense, earning himself an approving bared-teeth smile from Will.

“I presume your favorite film would be Lady and the Tramp?” Hannibal added in return. Will turned his attention back to his psychiatrist with a downright salacious shark’s grin.

“Figured you got me on that one?” Will retorted in a self-satisfied tone, “Think again: Oliver and Company.” Will's eyes strayed to their impromptu guest again and then widened in recognition. “You saved me from that glass in the pet store!” Will exclaimed in awe. “I never got the chance to thank you.”

Hannibal's eyes narrowed at Matt. So this was the unworthy person who had broken his Sweet William's skin and drew his blood without permission. Hannibal placed the apologetic intruder back onto his rude list. Completely ignoring the possessiveness exuded by the psychiatrist for his patient (although Matt was all-too-well aware of it) Will's erstwhile savior bounced on the balls of his feet with glee, hands buried in his pockets as if to contain his excitement.

"You remember me." The words were spoken with a soft, loving reverence and a giddy smile in *his* Will's direction; Hannibal had seen enough.

"What is it you came for, Mr…?"

"Brown. Matthew Brown." A cocky grin at an intrigued Will accompanied Matt's introduction.

"Quite." Hannibal looked distinctly unimpressed by this (in his mind) young upstart, "Mr. Brown, you must make an appointment in the future, so to avoid infringing upon another patient's scheduled time," Hannibal informed him with clipped, stern words.

"It's fine, Hannibal; he clearly came here now for a reason." Will shushed his lover by allowing his time to be used thus. It was his own personal appointment after all. Hannibal always said that during a patient's hour, they were free to direct where the session went. Realizing he had nothing more to object with, Hannibal stood down. Will smiled warmly at the obviously discomfited psychiatrist in what he hoped was a reassuring manner, before steeling his gaze and speaking to Matt, "It must be important." The sentence was more of a challenging statement than an actual question.

"I have answers to the questions you've been raising in the weeks since your awakening… I'm just like you. Not human."

Will and Hannibal froze as opposite emotions grew in their hearts. Hannibal's world gained a new fissure in its construction. If he wasn't human (it would be absurd to not at least entertain the notion) then everything Hannibal made himself up to be was shifted irrevocably out of place. He wasn't a cannibal- he was simply another animal doing what its ingrained instincts told it to do. Frankly, Hannibal was quite put out by that idea. He was *normal*. Plebeian.

Will felt only overwhelming relief as an explanation for his utter alienation from society presented itself. He was normal! He was just an inhuman being acting as its species should. It was liberating, to put it mildly. Matt saw both reactions clearly, Will and Hannibal being near foils to each other, but Matt only had eyes for Will now.

"I first noticed when we met in the pet store, Mr. Graham, so I wanted to make sure," Matt looked a tad sheepish as he admitted, "I kinda followed you a bit. Dr. Lecter too, but mostly you Mr. Graham." Matt gave a flourish and a bow in the profiler's direction upon stating the last part, and his eyes grew dark and hungry beneath his lashes as he gazed at Will adoringly. Matt wasn't stupid enough to completely ignore Hannibal, because the man was subtly seething from where he stood stock still.

Will was, quite frankly, intrigued by Matt. He raised no complaints when Matt cautiously rested one palm on Will's forearm, gauging the profiler's reaction.

"Each man is only what he can make of himself. And we," Matt began, glancing away from Will to look squarely at Hannibal, though his hand squeezed gently where it lingered on Will's arm, "can be immortals. I will share what I know of our kind with you if you allow me to stay." Matt was still staring intently at Hannibal's face which had settled into a mask of indifference. All three knew that Hannibal was weighing the pros and cons. While Hannibal silently deliberated, Matt turned back to Will almost shyly. Will smiled at him to reassure the younger man he would hear him out eagerly. "I've never felt a connection like the one all of us have, well, ever. I know I'm right: we three are of the ancient race of Wendigo- and I'll be damned if I let this opportunity slip from my grasp without a fight." Matt's full attention was now upon Will; both pairs of eyes, one dark honey and one bright storm, were half-lidded and intense. "I can't let go of you especially, Will…" Matt's voice dripped with reverent wonder and his predator's gaze both stirred something deep in the darkest parts of Will's being.

Hannibal's shadow was sucked from the room silently as he retreated to give the two privacy. Hannibal had accepted Matt into their dynamic.

"I'll have you know that I'm not interested in another partner; you can stay but you'll never have me *that way*," Will spoke with a smirking voice. Something about having the eager attentions of two powerful men awoke Will's heretofore hidden queenly personality. It was as easy as breathing to let go of his inhibitions like this… but the latter was infinitely more pleasurable. Matt was nearly Hannibal's polar opposite, a perfect foil of his dour personality. Whereas Hannibal was closed-off in affect, Matt was nearly painfully open and earnest; Hannibal's restraint made others respect him and Matt's confident air did the same. "I want to watch you work."

A smile slid slick and slow across Matt's thin lips. It was like watching oil spilled into a puddle in a parking lot: gritty, beautiful, and dangerously fascinating. Will was all too happy to have caused it, a similar oily grin spreading his lips over his teeth as though he were baring them to some poor prey instead.

Matt looked like he wanted to lean in and kiss him.

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